

August 25, 2005

The Honorable Ted Stevens  
Chairman, Committee on Commerce, Science and Transportation  
United States Senate  
508 Dirksen Senate Office Building  
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Daniel Inouye  
Ranking Member, Committee on Commerce, Science and Transportation  
United States Senate  
722 Hart Senate Office Building  
Washington, DC 20510

Dear Chairman Stevens and Senator Inouye:

We appreciate your leadership in developing legislation that would update our nation's telecommunications laws. We are writing to urge that the Senate Commerce Committee make telecom reform its highest priority when Congress returns in September.

Comprehensive legislation that encourages the development of communications innovations and their widespread deployment, as well as strengthens and stabilizes universal service, will benefit millions of Americans. Indeed, there are urgent reasons to focus on telecom policy:

- Universal Service, which makes phone service affordable for millions of Americans, faces a funding crisis. Congress must act to stabilize Universal Service, ensure that it helps bring affordable broadband services to greater numbers of Americans, and reassert the priority of wiring schools and libraries with the technology that empowers educators and students with the Internet access they need for learning and personal growth.
- Breathtaking new technology for mobile communications and high-speed Internet access can get to the market quicker, in more places, and more cheaply for more Americans, if Congress will provide the regulatory certainty that encourages the build-out of cutting-edge fiber, wireless, cable and satellite networks; these technologies bring a myriad of social, educational, medical and public safety benefits.
- Updating the telecom laws can boost our economy, creating jobs and substantial economic growth; broadband deployment is not just a consumer innovation, it can be the foundation of productivity gains and innovative business services for companies large and small.
- Finally, as communications diversify, it is also critical that vital social objectives and consumer safeguards are upheld across all technologies,

including universal service, 911, law enforcement needs and access for persons with disabilities. We need to make certain that key governmental protections remain in place and are clearly applicable as technologies advance.

Our organizations support telecommunications policies that assure the continued availability of widely affordable and high quality communications services to all Americans, as well as speeds the deployment of advanced communications services and applications throughout the nation. Less than 10 years after enactment of the 1996 Telecommunications Act, the new technology in our lives is truly remarkable. But we can make this new technology available to greater numbers of Americans if Congress will adopt updated laws that encourage their widespread deployment.

Thank you again for your leadership in developing responsible new laws governing America's telecommunications networks and for your consideration of our views on this important issue. We urge the Committee to make telecom policy a priority, and we look forward to working with you to achieve these important goals for all Americans.

Sincerely,

Alliance for Public Technology  
Alliance for Technology Access  
American Association of People with Disabilities  
American Corn Growers  
Communication Service for the Deaf, Inc.  
Communications Workers of America  
Labor Council for Latin American Advancement  
Latino Education Project  
League of United Latin American Citizens  
Telecommunications for the Deaf, Inc.